

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02

ACDA-07 /065 W

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R 011721Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7072

INFO CINCSOUTH

DOD

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3034

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, OAS, ES, HO

SUBJECT: RETENTION OF HELICOPTERS FOR OAS

1. OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS (GOH) (INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER ROBERTO PALMA GALVEZ, VICE FOREIGN MINISTER POLICARPO CALLEJAS AND CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF, BRIG. GENERAL MARIO CHINCHILLA) HAVE EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR BECKER STRONG CONCERN THAT U.S. ARMY HELICOPTERS CONTINUE TO BE SUPPLIED TO THE OAS OBSERVER TEAMS. THE GOH HAS HEARD RUMORS THAT THE U.S. HELICOPTERS MAY BE PULLED OUT ON 15 JULY 1977. THE GOH FEELS VERY STRONGLY THAT THE OAS OBSERVERS TEAMS ARE VITAL TO CONTINUED PEACE IN THE DISPUTED BORDER AREAS. THE GOH POSITION IS THAT WITHOUT THE OAS TEAMS THE CIVILIAN POPULATION ON BOTH SIDES WILL DRIFT BACK INTO THE POCKETS TO FARM THE LAND. WITH THEM WILL COME THE TROOPS OF BOTH SIDES AND INCIDENTS WILL BE BOUND TO OCCUR. THESE INCIDENTS COULD BERY EASILY ESCALATE, GIVEN THE STATE OF PREPAREDNESS ON BOTH SIDES, OR BE OF SUFFICIENT MAGNITUDE TO SPARK ANTOHER ARMED CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES (WHICH WOULD BE AGAINST THEIR BEST INTEREST AND WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT U.S. POLICY INTERESTS). THE OAS OBSERVERS CANNOT FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT HELICOPTER SUPPORT.

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THUS THE GOH CONCERN THAT THE U.S. HELICOPTERS NOT BE WITHDRAWN. IF THEY ARE WITHDRAWN, THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR A REQUEST FROM HONDURAS TO TAKE A MORE DIRECT ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

2. VICE FOREIGN MINISTER CALLEJAS ALSO TOLD AMBASSADOR BECKER THAT DURING THE OAS CONFERENCE IN GRENADA, HE (CALLEJAS) HAD TALKED

WITH SECRETARY GENERAL ORFILA AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OAS PEACE KEEPING MISSION. ALL AGREED THAT THE OAS OBSERVERS SHOULD BE KEPT IN THE DISPUTED AREAS AND THAT THE U.S. HELICOPTERS SHOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPLY TRANSPORTATION FOR THE TAMS.

3. THE GOH IS WAITING FOR THE INAUGURATION OF GENERAL CARLOS ROMERO IN EL SALVADOR TO SEE IF ANY FORWARD MOVEMENT WILL BE MADE ON THE LONG DELAYED MEDIATION AGREEMENT. THERE IS NOT MUCH OPTIMISM BECAUSE THE GENERAL THINKING IS THAT ROMERO WILL BE CONCERNED WITH INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF A SERIOUS NATURE AND WILL GIVE PRIORITY OVER SOLUTIONS TO DOMESTIC MATTERS. ROMERO WILL NOT BE OVERLY CONCERNED WITH BORDER SOLUTIONS UNLESS THERE IS ANOTHER FLARE UP.

4. THE COUNTRY TEAM IN HONDURAS SUPPORTS THE VIEW THAT THE OAS OBSERVERS TEAMS ARE CRITICAL AND ESSENTIAL TO CONTINUE THE STATUS QUO WHICH IS STABILIZED AND PREVENT BORDER INCIDENTS THAT WOULD LEAD TO MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. IT ALSO SUPPORTS THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF U.S. HELICOPTERS TO SUPPORT THE OAS TEAMS.  
BECKER

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Markings:**  
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